

Remarks

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested. Claims 1-20 are pending in the application, with claim 1 and 11 being the independent claims. Based on the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 3, 6-10, 13, and 16-20 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

In the Office Action, claims 1-2, 4-5, 11-12, and 14-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Adams, et al, U.S. Patent No. 6,163,862 (Adams). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The Examiner has not established that Adams teaches each and every limitation of recited independent claims 1 and 11. In the Office Action, the Examiner equates the “digitized sense signal” recited in claims 1 and 11 with the on-chip signal 26 of Adams. (Office Action, p. 3). However, the Examiner fails to identify what process-dependent parameter the on-chip signal 26 allegedly represents. In the Response to Arguments section of the Office Action, the Examiner appears to argue that the term “process-dependent” recited in claims 1 and 11 should be ignored. Specifically, the Examiner states that “[w]ith using the word ‘parameter’, it is not specific of the meaning of process dependent integrated circuit and therefore the

examiner is giving the limitation the broadest reasonable interpretation.” (Office Action, p. 2).

However, this is not a case of the Examiner giving a term recited in the claim its broadest reasonable interpretation. Instead, the Examiner is explicitly ignoring a recited claim term which is impermissible. Independent claims 1 and 11 recite a “process-dependent parameter.” The specification makes the definition of a “process-dependent” parameter clear. As discussed in Applicants’ Reply to the Office Action dated July 3, 2006, circuit parameters “are considered ‘process-dependent’ because they depend on the particular technology used to process the IC chip.” (Specification, para. [0035]). Adams relates to methods and apparatus for evaluating on-chip signals using an on-chip test circuit with an externally applied test signal. (Adams, col. 1, lines 8-10). In Adams, an on-chip signal to be evaluated (26) and an externally generated reference signal (32a) are applied to inputs of a test circuit 30. (Adams, col. 2, lines 21-24). The on-chip signal is compared with the reference signal to produce an output, corresponding to a characteristic of the on-chip signal. (Adams, col. 2, lines 25-27). Neither the on-chip signal nor the test signal received by the test circuit of Adams represent a process dependent integrated circuit parameter.

In addition, the Examiner states that Adams discloses “the at least one determined analog value is utilized to configure an operational portion of the integrated circuit (10) to account for the measured process-dependent parameter.” (Office Action, p. 3). However, the Examiner has not identified any passages within Adams to support this assertion. Adams simply does not teach or suggest that the

output of the test circuit is used to correct for parameters in the operational portion of the chip.

Thus, nowhere does Adams teach or suggest that a "process-dependent parameter is measured within a process monitor portion of the integrated circuit and the at least one determined analog value is utilized to configure an operational portion of the integrated circuit to account for the measured process-dependent parameter," as recited in amended independent claims 1 and 11.

For at least these reasons, independent claims 1 and 11 are patentable over Adams. Claims 2, 4, and 5 depend from claim 1 and claims 12, 14, and 15 depend from claim 11. For at least the above reasons, and further in view of their own features, dependent claims 2, 4, 5, 12, 14, and 15 are patentable over Adams. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

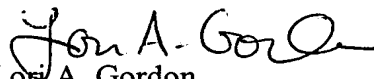
Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

STERNE, KESSLER, GOLDSTEIN & FOX P.L.L.C.


Lori A. Gordon
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 50,633

Date: July 16, 2007

1100 New York Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005-3934
(202) 371-2600